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## Mohammad Natsir: Some Aspects of His Thought on Statehood

### Introduction

Some say that when a people are in the grip of overpowering odds, they begin to struggle for a way out. At such periods of history often bring to the fore a national hero, who, having supreme confidence in the cause he advocates, leads his people to ultimate triumph and glory<sup>1</sup>. This has been true in the course of Indonesian history; many leaders have appeared to give response to the challenges of their respective times. During the early twentieth century, for instance, i.e., when Indonesian people were deeply involved in the independence struggle, or even many years after they got independence, there were many Muslims who played a historical role and indeed were recognized as the great na-

tional heroes as well as the leaders of their *Ummah*.

Mohammad Natsir was such a leader. He dedicated his life totally to his beloved nation, state, and religion. He was not only a man of speech but also a man of action, as can be seen from the whole course of his life. Many aspects of his life and thought, therefore, need to be studied seriously and introduced widely, not only to the Indonesian youth, to rekindle the spirit of his life and struggle in their hearts, but also to the wider Muslim world which was not excluded from his concern, if not his responsibility as the member of the *Ummah*. However, this paper will only attempt to focus on a small part of his legacy for Islam and statehood and will be based on only those his books

1 G. Allana. *Muslim Political Thought through the Ages: 1562-1947*. 2nd edition. (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1988), p.5.

and others on him that are available in the Library of Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal.

### Sketch of Natsir's Intellectual Biography

Muhammad Natsir was born into a devout Muslim family of Alahan Panjang, West Sumatra, Indonesia, on 17 July 1908 A.D. His father, Idris Sutan Saripado, was a pious man who worked as a clerk. His mother, Khadijah, was also very good Muslimah. His parents were very concerned about his education, so it is not surprising that they sent young Natsir to study not only at a religious school or *Madrasah Diniyyah* but also at secular schools administered by the colonial government, viz. the *Hollaads Inlandche School* (Elementary School) in Solok, and then the *Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs* (Junior High School) in Padang. Having finished his primary school and junior high school satisfactorily in 1923 and 1930 respectively, he went to Bandung for further study. In this "Paris" of Java, he joined the *Algemene Middlebare*

*School* (Senior High School). He finished his studies there with a very good mark in 1930, and therefore he was entitled to enter an institution of higher education such as the *Recht Hogeschool* (Faculty of Law) in Batavia (Jakarta) or the Faculty of Economy in Rotterdam, the Netherlands<sup>2</sup>. However, he never took this very promising chance, because he was more interested in thinking of and involving himself in the independence struggle and especially because he was very concerned about Islam and the *Ummah*, which were facing all kinds of political, economic, social, and religious problems at that time. From 1931 to 1932, he did a course for a teacher diploma at the *Lager Onderwijs* (college), which was his last formal education. During his study in Bandung for more than six years, he also studied Islam intensively under Ahmad Hasan (1887-1958), a great modernist scholar who headed the *Persatuan Islam*<sup>3</sup>.

Natsir's career as a leader started when he was chosen to be the chairman of *Jong Islamieten Bond* (Muslim Youth As-

2 Ajip Rosidi's introduction to M. Natsir, *Kebudayaan Islam Dalam Perspektif Sejarah*. (Jakarta: Girisukti Pasaka, 1988), p. xviii.

3 For a comprehensive discussion on Persis see Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century Indonesia*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970).

sociation) of Bandung for a period of four years, 1928-1932. It was during this time that he came to know many prominent Muslim scholars from whom he learnt much about Islam and politics. Among these great personalities were Haji Agus Salim, Syaikh A. Syurkati, Mr. Kasman Singodimedjo, Mr. Mohamad Roem, Prawoto Mangkusasmito, and<sup>4</sup>. His deep involvement in politics was not based on his vested interest but was only for the sake of the *Ummah*. It was his seriousness, tireless efforts and the support he received from the *Ummah* that later on led him to occupy such important posts such as the chairman of the *Masyumi* Party (1949-1958), Minister of Information (1946-1949), Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia (1950-1951), and the chairman of Islamic Propagation Council of Indonesia (1967-1993).

Natsir's life was wholeheartedly dedicated to his people, state, and religion. Indeed his concern was not limited to the national affairs only but extended to international affairs, especially to affairs of the Muslim world. This can be seen from his involvement in many international organizations where he remained in

touch with Muslims until his death. For example, he was a member of Majlis Ta'sisi Rabitah Alam Islami, Mecca (1969-1993), Majlis A'la al - Alami lil Masjid, Mecca (1976 -1993), one of the Founder Committees of Oxford Islamic Studies Center, England (1987), one of the Founder Council of International Islamic Charitable Organization, Kuwait (1986), one of members of the Curator Council of International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan (1987), and Vice President World Muslim Congress, Karachi (1967- 1993). Moreover, in recognition of his authority and expertise in Islamic thought, he was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa by University Kebangsaan and by Science University of Penang, Malaysia, in 1991. In addition, he was awarded Jaizatul malik Faisal al-Alamiyah by King Faisal in 1980, which was also given to his Pakistan and Indian contemporaries Sayyid Abu'l A'la Mawdudi and Sayyid Ali Nadvi respectively.

### His works

Natsir was a great scholar who always worked for the betterment of the Indonesian people's spiritual and material life. He

4 Yusuf A. Puar, ed. *Mohammad Natsir 70 Tahun: Kenang-kenangan Kehidupan dan Perjuangan*. (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1978), p. 18.

did so not merely through his inspiring speeches and practical acts, but also good writings. Like his contemporary from the sub-continent of India, Sayyid Abu'l A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979), who was actively involved in expressing his Islamic ideas in his early twenties, Natsir also started writing on Islam and politics in Bahasa Indonesia and Dutch when he was still a high school student. It was only in his later life that he also wrote in English. He could speak several languages besides those mentioned above. Like Ridwan Saidi, George McT. Kahin also remarks, 'Natsir masters seven languages namely Dutch, English, Arabic, French, German, Latin, and Esperanto<sup>5</sup>. He has left behind no less than forty-five books and articles dealing with various subjects on Islam<sup>6</sup>. Ajip Rosidi, a professor at the Foreign Language University, Osaka, Japan, is right in saying that "Natsir's writings are not only important in terms of documentation or historical records, but they also give a guidance towards the steps that will be taken by the latter generations<sup>7</sup>." Among

of his most important works concerning Islam and statehood are listed the follows<sup>8</sup>

1. Capita Selecta 2 vols.
2. Islam and Free Reasoning
3. Islam as the Foundation of State
4. Islam as an Ideology
5. Islamic Culture in a Historical Perspective
6. The Unity of Religion and State

#### **His Ideas on Islam and Statehood**

Islam is everything for him. This is because he realizes and believes that the *raisons d'être* of man's existence and activities in the world is none other than to worship God Almighty. Worshipping God, however, is not limited only to activities like prayer, fasting, hajj etc., but includes much more than this. Every good deed which is performed for the sake of God can be considered as worship or *'ibadah*. It is only by fulfilling this duty that a believer will lead a correct life in this world and be happy in the next

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<sup>6</sup> See Yusuf A. Puar, ed. *Muhammad Natsir 70 Tahun*, pp. 406-409.

<sup>7</sup> Ajip Rosidi's introduction to M. Natsir. *op cit.*, p. xxx.

<sup>8</sup> All of these works are written in Bahasa Indonesia; for a comprehensive list of his works, see Yusuf Abdulah Puar, ed. *Muhammad Natsir 70 Tahun: Kenang-kenangan* >

world. Thus, he becomes a true worshiper of God. The true believer is who strives to 'eliminate all sorts of tyrannical actions' around him all of the time.

Islam, according to Natsir, is, therefore, not merely concerned with the relationship between man and God, but also between man and man and even between man and his environment or nature<sup>9</sup>. Quoting Hamilton A.R. Gibb, he says: "Islam is indeed much more than a system of theology, it is a complete civilization." This means that Islam deals with all aspects of human life, including economics, education, politics etc.

'Islam is not merely an ideology,' but is also a way of life that should be realized in the real world, i.e. by applying the Islamic law or *Shari'a* in every man's daily activities. In order to apply the *Shari'a* fully, Muslims should possess freedom, the freedom to practice the *Shari'a* without feeling frightened and threatened. Freedom also signifies the freedom from exploitation of man by man. In line with this thought, Natsir further states: "Basically Islamic teaching is a revolution, namely the revolution in destroying and

fighting against all kind of exploitation"<sup>10</sup>. If they do not have such real freedom, then establishing or having a state becomes a necessity or even, perhaps, an obligation. However, it should always be borne in mind that establishing the state is not an end itself, it is only a means to achieve Islamic objectives i.e., in Qur'anic terminology, "to make His words uppermost." Emphasizing the essence of the state Natsir remarks:

The State for us is not an objective, but a means. The state affairs essentially and basically constitute an integral part of Islam. Its objective is: Complete implementation of the law of God, whether that relating to the individual or communal life, whether regarding life in this world or in next world<sup>11</sup>.

Munawir Sjadzali in his *Islam dan Tata Negara: Ajaran, Sejarah dan Pemikiran* states that according to Natsir, Islam, as contrasted with other religions, has rules or laws on statehood and embraces the civil and criminal laws. To apply the laws it is undeniable that we need the institution whose authority would ensure the application of the laws. Therefore, the existence of the state is necessary<sup>12</sup>. In relation to this, Mu-

9 Muhammad Natsir. *Capita Selecta*. Vol. II. (Djakarta: Pustaka Pendis, 1957), p.59.

10 Muhammad Natsir, *Capita Selecta*. Vol. II, p. 125.

11 Yusuf Abdullah Puar. *Muhammad Natsir 70 Tahun...*, p. 52.

12 Munawir Sjadzali. *Islam dan Tata Negara*. (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1990),

hammad S. El- Awa, in his *On the political System of the Islamic State*, remarks: 'If there is a definite objective which the government in an Islamic state must attempt to achieve, it is 'Islamicity,' which means obedience to the teachings of Islam in all its various aspects. This obedience is to be achieved by adherence to the rules of Islam by those of in charge of the principal public functions of the government, and by the fact that the common law which the state applies is derived from and does not contradict, these rules'<sup>13</sup>.

In line with this, the following paragraphs will try to analyze Natsir's point of view on Islam and statehood. If we took back to the first half of the twentieth century we observe that the idea of the Islamic state started spreading to almost all parts of the Muslim world from Morocco in the West to Indonesia in the East. This spirit of the right of self-determination, which was rooted in the spirit of pan-Islamism kindled by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897), lit the hearts of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals. Muham-

mad Natsir was one of them. Like many great scholars of Islam in other Muslim countries, Natsir also proposed making Islam as the basis of state for the Republic of Indonesia. This is in line with the facts, he pointed out, that the majority of Indonesian population was Muslims i.e., the people who had been totally involved in driving out the colonial ruler. He says: "Those who observe the struggle of Indonesian people in the last quarter of this century will soon realize that in our Muslim struggle in Indonesia religion surely plays an important role. It is a part of our life struggle both, in the social and political fields."<sup>14</sup>

Before discussing statehood, it is necessary to limit or if possible to define the term 'state' itself. Since many definitions of the state are given by scholars and philosophers such as Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, Hegel, Marx, Adam Smith, Rousseau, Robert Owen, Plato, and others, it is, according to Natsir, almost impossible to define the state in a single sentence. Therefore, he tried to clarify this term by merely describing the 'characteristics' or

p. 193.

13 Muhammad S. El-Awa, *On the Political System of the Islamic State*, (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1980), pp. 75-76.

14 Yusuf Abdullah Fuar. *Muhammad Natsir 70 Tahun: Kenang-kenangan Kehidupan dan Perjuangan*, p. 63.



'elements' which are found in a state<sup>15</sup>.

"The State," Nasir explains, "is an institution that has special rights, tasks, and objectives." In this respect, he does not seem different from the other political thinkers when describing the basic requirements for any modern state. The requirements of the modern state are 1). territory; 2). people; 3) government; 4). sovereignty; and 5). constitution or the other unwritten sources of law and authority<sup>16</sup>. Explaining each of these requirements, Natsir says that the first requirement includes all society and all institutions in it. The next requirement bounds or unites the institutions under a stimulation of law. The third requirement functions to coordinate and regulate all segments of the society. The forth requirement forces the people to obey the determined rules and laws. Finally, the last requirement aims at meeting and guiding the people's needs as a whole<sup>17</sup>. From these requirements it is clearly seen that the state and its law hardly can be separated one from another. In

his *Principles of Social and Political Theory*, Ernest Barker remarks:

The State is a legal association: a juridically organized nation, or a nation organized for action under legal rules. It exists for law: it exists in and through law: we may even say that it exists as law, if by law we mean not only a sum of legal rules, but also, and in addition, an operative system of effective rules which are actually valid and regularly enforced. The essence of the State is a living body of effective rules; and in that sense the State is law<sup>18</sup>.

However, unlike Barker, what Natsir means by law here is not the man-made law but the Law of God, namely *Shari'a* which is derived from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Thus, the State he wants is the one based on the law of God.

This kind of state, he believes, should be based on Islam, a 'democratic-state based on Islam.' For 'Islamic teaching that deals with the statehood and the living society has complete characters for the life of both state and society and even can guarantee divergence of life based on tolerance

15 Muhammad Natsir. *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, (Bandung; Pimpinan Fraksi Masyumi dalam Konstituante, 1957), p. 6.

16 Ahmad Syafii Maarif. *Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial, 1987), p. 127.

17 Muhammad Natsir. *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, p.7.

18 Ernest Barker. *Principles of Social and Political Theory*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 89.

among all of groups within the state. If it is big, it will not oppress. If it is tall, even it will protect.<sup>19</sup> He chooses Islam because it also provides the basis that is 'free from relatinism.' No elements of human life can be separated from religion. As ways of life, there are only two choices before us, religion or secularism (or *ladiniyah* as Natsir calls it). Unlike religion, secularism does not have a strong and solid basis.

The philosophy foundation of state, Natsir explains, is the foundation that can build and guide the people materially and spiritually so as to be a nation that has morality, or, in modern terms, a civilized people, i.e., people who are able to manage themselves without being controlled by the government. He states further that there is only one state philosophy that can shoulder such a heavy task namely the state philosophy that is based on belief in and obedience to the sovereignty of God, as the absolute source of law and the values of life.

He believes that if the state philosophy is not based on the sovereignty of God, so the formulations that the parliament will

result and produce will merely be 'dry grains of sand which are meaningless'.<sup>20</sup> The sovereignty of God is over and above all kinds of worldly sovereignty. In this respect, Natsir's opinion is similar to that of Mawdudi, and may have been influenced by him. Mawdudi remarks: "The Qur'an says that sovereignty in all its aspects is only for God. He alone is the Creator and the real Ruler of this universe. Therefore to Him belongs the sole right of being the sovereign over all this creation."<sup>21</sup> However, neither of these scholars explains clearly and in detail as how this kind sovereignty can be applied in the realm of practical politics.

By emphasizing the position of Islam as the philosophy of the state, Natsir does not mean to make the state theocratic, i.e., the direct government of priests who govern people on behalf of God. "In Islam," he says, "priesthood is not recognized." "Therefore," he adds, "the state which is based on Islam is not theocratic. It is democratic state. It is not a secular state, as I explained earlier. It is the Islamic democratic state. If one insists on giving it a general

19 Muhammad Natsir. *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, pp. 11-12.

20 Muhammad Natsir. *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, p. 39.

21 Sayid Abu'l A'la Mawdudi. *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 10th ed. (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1990), p. 212.



name, perhaps the state which is based on Islam can be called a Theistic Democracy."<sup>22</sup> It seems that what Natsir means by theistic democracy here is that all rules and regulations stipulated by the government should be in accordance with the Divine Law or *Shari'a* and their application be based on a democratic system.

Natsir does not deny that the *Qur'an* does not completely and fully deal with politics, say, statehood. Even the word *daulah*, which means state is, according to Ahmad Syafii Maarif, not found in the *Qur'an*; the term of *daulah* does occur (LIX:7), but it does not mean the state. This term is used figuratively to illustrate the distribution of property<sup>23</sup>. The *Qur'an* does not provide detailed guidance in every single aspect of human life, especially those relating to mundane affairs which are subject to change according to time and place. What is regulated by Islam are, Natsir points out, only the essential and fundamental tenets which are in accordance with the very nature or *fitrah* of

man; these tenets are eternal and immutable and are applicable in all places and time, in the past and in the present<sup>24</sup>. Basing himself on these solid basic teachings, man must use his rational faculty and *ijtihad* in all fields of life in accordance with the demands of his time and place. In *The Evolution of Islamic Constitutional Theory and Practice*, Kemal A. Faruqi makes a similar point:

Shari'a itself contains a collection of interrelated principles and rules and cases governed by such principles and rules, which are intended to control human individual and group conduct in accordance with the revealed Word of God -the *Qur'an* - and the precepts and practices (*sunna*) of His Messenger, Muhammad. Inasmuch as Shari'a is all-embracing and the submission required is comprehensive and total, and of necessity, the explicitly stated principles and rules in the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* are limited, they have been extended and elaborated by means of various disciplines to cover situations not directly dealt in the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* - and to deal with new situations as they arise<sup>25</sup>.

In line with the belief he

22 Muhammad Natsir. *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, p. 30.

23 Ahmad Syafii Maarif. *Islam dan masalah Kenegaraan*, p.15; see also M.S. Agwani. "Religion and Politics in Islamic Theory and Practice," in *Islam in the Modern Age*. Vol.II, No. 1 (February 1971), p.46, and Louay M. Safi. "The Islamic State: A Conceptual Framework." *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, No.2 (September, 1991).

24 Muhammad Natsir. *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, p. 29.

25 Kemal A. Faruqi. *The Evolution of Islamic Constitution Theory and Practice*. (Karachi:

holds, Natsir, does not object to whatever title is used to designate the head of the state, be it president, king, caliph, Amirul Mu'minin etc. He firmly maintains that whether or the head of state calls himself caliph is not the mainconcern. The title of caliph is not an obligatory requirement in the Islamic government. It is not a *conditio sine qua non*. What is most important is that the head of the state, who is mandated as the *ula'l-amr* of the Muslim Ummah, is capable and ready to guarantee that Islamic laws relating to the state affairs can run well in theory as well as in practice<sup>26</sup>. In this respect, in the words of Syafii Maarif, 'Natsir goes beyond a great scholar like Rashid Rida who held that a leader who occupies the office of caliph must come from the Quraysh tribe.' Similarly, Natsir also surpasses his contemporary, Mawdudi, who insists that the head of the state must be a caliph and the form of government should be the caliphate. However, later on, when the Islamic Republic of Pakistan came into being

and was headed by a president, it seems that Mawdudi changed his mind by migrating from India to the republican state.

Another thing which is very important in Natsir's thought concerning statehood is his ideas on *Shura* or 'democracy'. Basing himself on the Qur'anic verse which states " ...and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs,"<sup>27</sup> Natsir suggests that the Islamic government should be based on the principles of *Shura*. This is, according to him, because Islam has affirmed that 'the value of consultation in governing life, either the life of society or the life of the state, should be preserved, supported, and encouraged. For it is necessary in the Islamic teaching that in dealing with the people the ruler should have acknowledgment and support from the ruled. He has to consult on everything concerning the life and interests of people.'<sup>28</sup> From this statement it can be inferred that, according to Natsir, the head of the state is chosen through an electoral system like prevailing in those other democratic countries.

National Publishing House Ltd., 1971), p. 1.

26 Yusuf Abdullah Puar, *Muhammad Natsir 70 Tahun*, p. 52-53.

27 What is meant by "affairs" here is human affairs regarding various aspects of mundane affairs such as politics, economics, society etc. See: Muhammad M. Pickthall. *The Glorious Qur'an: Text and Explanatory Translation*. (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 1992) p.67. and *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*. (Departemen Agama R.I.; 1987), p. 103.

28 Muhammad Natsir, *Islam Sebagai Dasar Negara*, p. 31.

Natsir was brave enough in proposing this idea at a time when most of the Islamic political thinkers of his time still adhered to the notion of the ideal state of the four rightly-guided caliphs upon which all subsequent state systems should be based. Describing Natsir's ideas on the principles of *Shura*, Syafii Maarif maintains that in dealing with and managing socio-political affairs, the principle of *Shura* ought to play an important role. How to develop and adapt the mechanism of the *Shura* depends on the *ijtihad* of the Muslim Ummah. This is because Islam does not lay down rigid rules in this respect, as already noted<sup>29</sup>.

However, we have to clarify what Natsir really means by democracy in Islam. It is true that Islam advocates a democratic system but, according to Natsir, what is meant by democracy here is that Islam gives people the rights to criticize, remind, and correct an autocratic government. If criticism and reminders are not enough, Islam gives people the right to abolish the autocratic system using mass-power and, if is necessary, even force<sup>30</sup>. In addition,

he also states that 'Islam is an anti dictatorship, anti absolutism (a system in which there is no limitation in power of the government), and anti anarchy system'<sup>31</sup>. Natsir explains, however, that this does not mean that in an Islamic government all of its affairs are fully given to the decision of the consultative assembly. Every thing that is clearly stated in 'the Holy Constitution', to borrow Abdulkadir Kurdi's words, instead of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, does not need to wait for the decision of the parliament. What needs to be discussed is, according to Natsir, only the ways of carrying out the law. "Islam is an understanding, a belief that has its own principles and characters. Islam neither needs 100% democracy nor 100% autocracy, Islam is ... Islam"<sup>32</sup>. Natsir tries to reconcile two opposite systems, the dictatorial and the democratic. "Perhaps," he concludes, "if considered as a synthesis, Islam is the synthesis which gives enough room for the evolution of whatever needs evolving and for the radicalism for whatever needs to be radical." Unfortunately, he neither gives a clear explanation nor de-

29 Ahmad Syafii Maarif. *Islam dan Masalah Kenegaraan*, p. 130.

30 Muhammad Natsir. *Capita Selecta*. 3rd ed. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1973), p. 439.

31 Yusuf Abdullah Puar. *Muhammad Natsir 70 Tahun...*, p. 59.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

tailed guide as to how this "unique reconciliation' can be applied in the government.

Unlike Mawdudi and Abdulkadir Kurdi, who strongly believed that in an Islamic system of government there should be a single party, i.e., Islamic government party, Natsir is of the opinion that to maintain and preserve the government on the democratic path political parties are unquestionably needed. He insists that as long as there is freedom to establish parties there is democracy. However, if the parties are buried, then democracy too follows them in the grave. What is left in the graveyard then is only a dictator.

### Conclusion

Mohammad Natsir was a great *'alim* as well as a prominent statesman of his time. He was also one of those Indonesian Muslim politicians who loudly advocated that Islam should serve as the foundation of the state. He proposed an Islamic governmental system for "modern era". It is true that not all of what he suggested was clearly explained and thoroughly in touch the real problems of the time. His idea of theo-democracy, the sovereignty of God, the status of Muslims and

non-Muslims in political affairs, etc. are examples. However, to a certain extent, his ideas concerning Islamic statehood went further than those of Rashid Rida and Abu'l A'la Mawdudi. In addition, if he had been involved in political affairs longer, he would have been able to formulate the model of Islamic government in detail.

In practical politics, Natsir played a great role in the history of Indonesia. One of Natsir's most significant and decisive contributions to the present Republic of Indonesia was his integrated motion or *mosi integral*. Through this measure, Natsir succeeded in reuniting all the Indonesian regions which were formerly divided by the Dutch into fifteen states under *Republik Indonesia Serikat*. Natsir thus helped create the single unified state of present day Indonesia.

Natsir was not only a Muslim nationalist, but also a true democratic politician who always gave priority to the interest and unity of the nation over those of his own group. Therefore, although he strongly insisted that Islam should be made the basis of the state of Indonesia, he changed his mind when the facts revealed that most members of parliament preferred Pancasila to Islam as the basis of the state. Henceforth, he

seemingly agreed to make the Pancasila as the only basis of the state of Republic of Indonesia. His approval of the Pancasila as the foundation of the state may be seen from the following statement of his:

... Indonesia is an Islamic country by virtue of the fact that Islam is recognized as the religion of Indonesian people, though intention is not expressed in the constitution to make it the state's religion. But neither has Indonesia excluded religion from statehood. In fact it has put the monotheistic creed in the one and only God, at the head of Pancasila - The Five Principles - adopted as the spiritual, moral and ethical foundation of the state and the nation<sup>33</sup>

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33 Cited in Munawir Sjadzali. *Islam dan Tata Negara*, p. 194.